

Of 3,511 Crematoria, 1,349 Are in Use: Fukui Has 557 and Uses 14 [I017]

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Version 1, 2026-09-22

Abstract

From Table 5 of the Report on Public Health Administration (FY2024) I counted cemeteries, crematoria and ossuaries by type of operator, and matched them against the cremations counted in I010.

There are 876,042 cemetery areas, 3,511 crematoria and 13,853 ossuaries.

Of the 3,511 crematoria, 1,349 (38.4%) were operated within the past year. The other 2,162 (61.6%) were not used at all.

But that is the national average, and the reality is split in two. Seventeen prefectures are at 100%, while Fukui uses 14 of its 557 (2.5%), Ishikawa 13 of 437 (3.0%) and Mie 28 of 640 (4.4%). **The median is 94.7%.**

82.4% of cemeteries (721,647 areas) are operated by individuals. Local governments account for 3.4% and religious corporations for 6.7%.

Conversely, 97.5% of the crematoria in regular use are operated by local governments. 73.9% of ossuaries are run by religious corporations.

Dividing 1,674,137 cremations by 1,349 crematoria in regular use gives 1,241 a year per facility, or 3.4 a day.

Hokkaido has 2,002 cemetery areas and 1,846 ossuaries — almost the same number. Ossuaries divided by cemeteries is 0.922 there against 0.0158 nationally, a factor of 58.3. Only 1.5% of its cemeteries are operated by individuals, the lowest of the 47 prefectures.

1. Introduction

I010 counted 383 burials, 1,674,137 cremations and 176,105 reinterments. **Those were events, not places.**

Table 5 counts the places where burial and cremation happen.

**How many cemeteries, crematoria and ossuaries does Japan have? Who operates them?
And how many are actually in use?**

2. Data

Cemeteries, crematoria, ossuaries	MHLW, Report on Public Health Administration, FY2024, Table 5 (Environmental Health). As at end of FY2024. Operators: local government, public-interest corporation, religious corporation, individual, other
Cremations	Same source, Table 6 (counted in I010)
Establishments and workers	MIC and METI, Economic Census 2021, 795 Crematory and cemetery management / 796 Ceremonial occasion services
Population and ageing rate	MIC, Basic Resident Register, 1 January 2026

All 47 prefectures are present, and **all four counts reconcile exactly with the national row** (876,042 cemeteries, 3,511 crematoria, 1,349 in regular use, 13,853 ossuaries; all differences zero).

"Crematoria in regular use" means those with a record of operation within the past year (Table 5, note 1).

Cemeteries are counted in "areas", not facilities.

3. Results

3-1 876,042 cemeteries, 3,511 crematoria, 13,853 ossuaries

	Count	
Cemeteries	876,042	areas
Crematoria	3,511	facilities
of which in regular use	1,349	facilities (38.4% of crematoria)
Ossuaries	13,853	facilities

Cemeteries outnumber crematoria 250 to 1, and crematoria in regular use 649 to 1.

3-2 82.4% of cemeteries are operated by individuals

Operator of the 876,042 cemetery areas	Areas	Share
Individual	721,647	82.4%
Other	65,234	7.4%
Religious corporation	58,700	6.7%
Local government	30,024	3.4%
Public-interest corporation	437	0.0%

Eight in ten of Japan's cemeteries are operated by individuals.

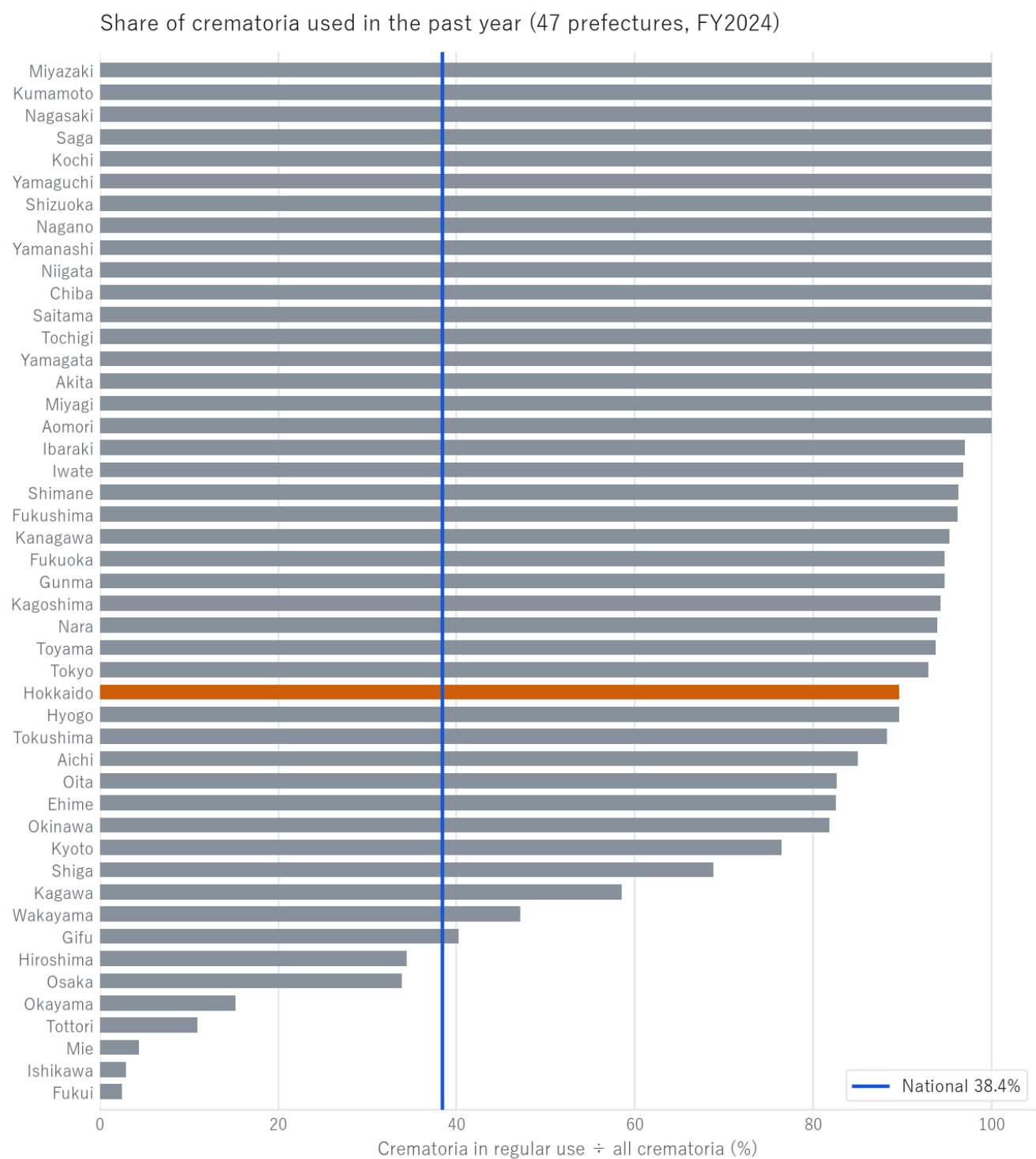
Crematoria and ossuaries look entirely different.

	Local government	Public-interest	Religious	Other
Crematoria 3,511	1,832 (52.2%)	6 (0.2%)	29 (0.8%)	1,644 (46.8%)
In regular use 1,349	1,315 (97.5%)	2 (0.1%)	4 (0.3%)	28 (2.1%)
Ossuaries 13,853	760 (5.5%)	115 (0.8%)	10,244 (73.9%)	2,734 (19.7%)

97.5% of the crematoria actually operating are run by local governments. Privately operated crematoria are almost all idle.

73.9% of ossuaries are run by religious corporations.

3-3 The share in use is split in two



Source: Report on Public Health Administration, FY2024, Table 5. "In regular use" means operated within the past year.

Figure 1. Share of crematoria used in the past year, 47 prefectures (FY2024).
Grey is prefectures, orange is Hokkaido, the blue vertical line is the national 38.4%.

National	38.4% (1,349 / 3,511)
Median	94.7%
Prefectures at 100%	17 of 47
High	Aomori 100.0% (36/36) / Miyagi 100.0% (27/27) / Akita 100.0% (25/25)
Low	Mie 4.4% (28/640) / Ishikawa 3.0% (13/437) / Fukui 2.5% (14/557)
Top ÷ bottom	39.8

The national 38.4% does not describe the situation. Seventeen of the 47 prefectures are at 100% and the median is 94.7%.

The average is pulled down by a handful of prefectures holding hundreds of unused crematoria — Fukui 557, Ishikawa 437, Mie 640.

Correlation (47 prefectures)	r
Share in use × population (log)	+0.135
Share in use × ageing rate	+0.146

The share in use relates to neither population nor ageing.

3-4 3.4 cremations a day per facility

1,674,137 cremations ÷ 1,349 crematoria in regular use	1,241 a year
Per day (dividing by 365)	3.4
Dividing by all 3,511 crematoria	477 a year

Cremations per facility	
High	Tokyo 5,576 / Kanagawa 5,258 / Saitama 4,031
Low	Hokkaido 505 / Gifu 437 / Shimane 415
Top ÷ bottom	13.4 , median 916
Correlation with population (log)	r = +0.765

The more urban the prefecture, the more cremations per facility. Per day, Tokyo is 15.3 and Shimane 1.1.

3-5 Per 100,000 population

	National	High	Low	Top ÷ bottom	Median
Cemeteries (areas)	707.8	Shimane 15,270 / Okayama 5,960 / Nagano 4,201	Tokyo 67.1 / Hokkaido 40.1 / Osaka 36.0	424	511
Ossuaries (facilities)	11.2	Saga 77.4 / Kumamoto 66.8 / Kagoshima 60.5	Chiba 2.0 / Saitama 1.9 / Kanagawa 1.6	48	6.8

Shimane has 15,270 cemetery areas per 100,000 people, 424 times Osaka's 36.0.

Share of cemeteries operated by individuals	
National	82.4%
High	Okinawa 99.2% / Shimane 98.7% / Nagano 97.2%
Low	Kagoshima 22.2% / Miyazaki 17.7% / Hokkaido 1.5%
Median	68.2%

3-6 Against the Economic Census

	Establishments	Workers	Per establishment	Municipalities present
795 Crematory and cemetery management	1,580	9,217	5.83	769
796 Ceremonial occasion services	12,587	142,531	11.32	1,532

Comparison	Ratio
Crematoria 3,511 + ossuaries 13,853 = 17,364 against 795's 1,580	10.99
In regular use 1,349 + ossuaries 13,853 = 15,202 against 1,580	9.62
Adding the 876,042 cemeteries	565

Cemeteries are not counted as establishments at all — 795's 1,580 establishments are 0.18% of the cemetery count. And 52.2% of crematoria are run by local governments, which are not Economic Census

establishments.

3-7 Hokkaido and the Kushiro Subprefecture

Hokkaido	
Cemeteries	2,002 areas
Crematoria	173 (155 in regular use, 89.6%)
Ossuaries	1,846 (13.3% of the national 13,853, 6th of 47)
Ossuaries ÷ cemeteries	0.922 (58.3 times the national 0.0158)
Cemetery operators	local government 1,504 (75.1%) / religious 418 (20.9%) / individual 31 (1.5%, 47th of 47)
Cremations per facility	78,350 ÷ 155 = 505 a year (45th of 47; national 1,241)
Per 100,000 population	cemeteries 40.1 (46th) / ossuaries 36.9 (6th)

Hokkaido has 2,002 cemeteries and 1,846 ossuaries — almost the same number. Nationally, ossuaries are 1.6% of the cemetery count.

Three quarters of Hokkaido's cemeteries are operated by local government and only 1.5% by individuals — the reverse of the national pattern.

Kushiro Subprefecture (Economic Census 2021, as counted in I010):

Municipality	795 Crematory/cemetery management	796 Ceremonial occasion services
Kushiro City	1	22
Kushiro Town	0	1
Akkeshi	0	1
Hamanaka	1	0
Shibecha	0	2
Teshikaga	0	2
Tsurui	1	1
Shiranuka	0	3
Total	3	32

4. Discussion

4-1 When the average does not describe the situation

The national share in use is 38.4%, but the median is 94.7% and 17 prefectures are at 100%. **These two numbers paint entirely different pictures.**

Read 38.4% alone and you get "six in ten of Japan's crematoria are unused." Read the median of 94.7% and you get "in most prefectures the crematoria are used." **Both are true.**

What is happening is that **a handful of prefectures register extraordinary numbers of crematoria** — Fukui 557, Ishikawa 437, Mie 640 — far more than their populations would suggest.

Small old crematoria left on the register without ever being formally closed is a plausible explanation, but **this table cannot confirm it.** Table 5 counts whether a facility is registered, not why it

remains so.

As with I009's public bathhouses (2,730 traditional among 23,668) and I012's 99.65% appointment rate, **these tables keep separate counts for "what the regime holds" and "what actually operates."** Table 5 is unusually helpful in stating both explicitly.

4-2 That 82.4% of cemeteries are individual

Of Japan's 876,042 cemetery areas, 721,647 are operated by individuals.

This means cemeteries are largely not a business. The Economic Census counts only 1,580 establishments in category 795, 0.18% of the cemetery count.

An individual cemetery is usually a small family or hamlet burial ground. Shimane's 15,270 areas per 100,000 and Okinawa's 99.2% individual share can be read as places where that form survives. But **the size of an "area" is unknown**, so the count of areas is not a count of graves or of land.

Meanwhile, **97.5% of the crematoria actually operating are local government facilities.** Within the same subject — what is done with the dead — **cemeteries are in private hands and cremation is in the state's.**

4-3 Hokkaido alone has a different shape

Hokkaido's figures fall outside the national pattern.

	National	Hokkaido
Share of cemeteries individual	82.4%	1.5% (47th)
Cemeteries per 100,000	707.8	40.1 (46th)
Ossuaries per 100,000	11.2	36.9 (6th)
Ossuaries ÷ cemeteries	0.0158	0.922 (58.3×)

Hokkaido has the second-fewest cemeteries per head in Japan and the sixth-most ossuaries. Three quarters of its cemeteries are municipal.

Candidate explanations include the history of settlement (planned villages and communal cemeteries from the Meiji period onward), snow, and the distribution of temples. **These are hypotheses that this table cannot test.** Table 5 records neither the date nor the circumstances of establishment.

What can be said is only that **the national pattern — cemeteries belong to individuals — does not hold in Hokkaido.**

4-4 What 3.4 a day means

1,674,137 cremations across 1,349 facilities in regular use is 3.4 a day each. Tokyo is 15.3; Shimane is 1.1.

Whether a municipality can keep a facility of this size on its own is a live question. By R005's calculation, the median municipal population ratio in 2050 is 0.664 (−33.6%) across 1,876 municipalities. Ageing, meanwhile, means deaths keep rising for some time.

Demand for a crematorium is set by deaths, not population. I010 found a strong correlation between the ageing rate and cremations ($r = +0.936$). **The period of falling population and the period of rising deaths overlap.**

This paper does not calculate further. **What it can say is that the present figure is 3.4 a day per facility.**

4-5 What the Kushiro Subprefecture shows

The subprefecture has three establishments in category 795 — one each in Kushiro City, Hamanaka and Tsurui — and 32 in 796.

The crematoria themselves belong to the municipalities, so they do not appear in the Economic Census. What appears is the private trade around them.

As I015 showed, Tsurui has one barbershop and two beauty salons. **That village also has one establishment in 795.** In a village of 2,368 people, a trade of that kind surviving is **something**

population does not explain.

5. Limitations

- The health register is as at **end of FY2024**, the Economic Census at **1 June 2021** — three years and ten months apart
 - Cemeteries are counted in "**areas**"; the size of an area (land, number of plots) is unknown
 - "Crematoria in regular use" means those **operated within the past year** (Table 5, note 1)
 - **Cremation counts are prefectural totals, not per facility.** Use across prefectural boundaries cannot be separated
 - Cremations per facility is an **average**; the distribution across facilities is not examined
 - Most crematoria are run by local governments and **are not Economic Census establishments**
 - **Cemeteries are not counted as establishments.** The ratio against 795 compares different units
 - The health register has **no municipal table**
 - Why unused crematoria remain registered (closure procedure, register maintenance) is **a hypothesis this table cannot test**
 - Why Hokkaido has so many ossuaries (settlement history, snow, temple distribution) is **likewise untestable here**
 - A correlation indicates the strength of a relationship, **not the direction of causation**
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6. How to reproduce

1. Download Table 5 (Environmental Health, cemeteries, crematoria and ossuaries) of the FY2024 Report on Public Health Administration from e-Stat (CP932)
2. Take the national row and the 47 rows from Hokkaido to Okinawa (nothing below "designated cities (regrouped)")
3. Take cemeteries, crematoria, crematoria in regular use and ossuaries across the six operator columns

4. Divide crematoria in regular use by all crematoria, and report **the median as well as the mean**
5. Divide the cremations of Table 6 by the number of crematoria in regular use
6. Compute per-100,000 figures and compare with Economic Census categories 795 and 796

Every figure in this paper is output by a single script (`kensan_208`). No intermediate value was copied by hand.

Scope of this paper

No new theory is claimed. **Table 5 of the Report on Public Health Administration is counted by operator and matched against the cremations counted in I010.** It shows that 1,349 of 3,511 crematoria (38.4%) are in regular use but that the median is 94.7% with 17 prefectures at 100%, that 82.4% of cemeteries are operated by individuals while 97.5% of working crematoria are municipal, and that in Hokkaido cemeteries and ossuaries are almost equal in number. Hypotheses are offered for the unused crematoria and for Hokkaido's different shape, but this table cannot test them. Correlations are reported; the direction of causation is not.

References and data sources

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3. Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, Basic Resident Register population, 1 January 2026
4. Yuuki Yamagishi, "Of 23,668 'Public Bathhouses', 2,730 Are Sento" (I009)
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Version history

Version	Date	Contents
1	2026-09-22	First release

How to cite

Yamagishi, Y. (2026). Of 3,511 Crematoria, 1,349 Are in Use: Fukui Has 557 and Uses 14 [I017].
Zenodo.

The DOI is shown on the Zenodo record page. For citation, use the **concept DOI**, which always resolves to the latest version.

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